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Bossuet and His Discourse on Universal History

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5240

BOSSUET AND HIS DISCOURSE

ON

UNIVERSAL HISTORY

BY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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INTRODUCTION

It was but natural that a generation which produced such renown writers as Pascal, Corneille, Racine and Molière, should also show the world masters of sacred eloquence. Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, ranks high not only as a sacred orator, but also as a historian, a controversialist and an ascetic writer. His eloquence earned for him the surname of "The Eagle of Meaux". A certain modern critic said that there was nothing in French that surpassed a fine page of Bossuet.

Just as in ancient times there was a people who, under the inspiration and guidance of Moses, kept clear and distinct the idea of God governing the world directly, so Bossuet among the writers of his century has grasped, more than any other, that simple idea of order, authority and the continual government by Providence. Within the bounds of his unrivaled works are found treasures of eternal human ethics. Especially from the pages of the Discourse on Universal History one

can draw innumerable instances of Bossuet's sound, Catholic conception of government, this conception which is so abused by our modern free thinkers, and self-made administrators of government.

In ecclesiastical questions, as well as in politics, Bossuet's voice carries you away in spite of yourself, and forces you to bow your head to the divine right such as he proclaims it, regardless of your inward convictions.

God, Christ, Our Savior, the Pope, the king - there is the luminous sphere in which Bossuet's thought evolves itself; there is his ideal for the world.

The purpose of this thesis is to show that Bossuet's conception of government, as manifested in his Discourse on Universal History, is based wholly on the Divine Law, as contrasted with the present day erroneous conception: "Might is right."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, the fifth son of Bénigne Bossuet, and Madeleine Mochet, was born at Dijon, on the night of September 27, 1627. He was baptized September 29, in St. Jean's Church. For more than a century his ancestors, both paternal and maternal had performed judicial functions.

Bossuet began his classical studies at the "Collège des Godrans", conducted by the Jesuits, in Dijon. In the meantime, his father was appointed to a seat in the parliament of Metz, and Jacques was left under the care of his uncle, Claude Bossuet, who was a renowned scholar. He mastered the Greek and Latin classics in a very short time. His favorite authors were Homer and Virgil, while the Bible was his "Livre de chevet."

He was destined to the Church very early, and for that reason he received the tonsure when he was only eight years old. At the age of thirteen, he obtained a canonicate in the Cathedral of Metz. At fifteen, he

entered the "Collège de Navarre" in Paris, in order to complete his classical works, and to study philosophy and theology. Six years later he was ordained sub-deacon, and the following year, deacon. Two years before his ordination to the priesthood, he lived in retirement, preparing himself for this sublime vocation under the direction of Saint Vincent de Paul. He was ordained March 18, 1652.

Shortly after his ordination, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him. Appointed Arch-deacon of Sarrebourg in January, 1652, he resided at Metz for several years, devoting much time to the study of the Bible, preaching sermons, and holding controversies with the Protestants, who at that time were very numerous at Metz.

In 1670, Bossuet was consecrated and appointed Bishop of Condom. A year later, however, he resigned his bishopric, and was elected a member of the French Academy. Being appointed preceptor to the Dauphin in September of the same year, he devoted himself to his tutorial functions with indefatigable energy. He composed for his pupil a number of works, of which the

"Discourse on Universal History" is the most celebrated.

When his functions as preceptor ended in 1681, he was appointed Bishop of Meaux. He resided in his diocese, and busied himself with its administration. During this period he completed his long interrupted works of historical controversy, wrote spiritual letters, took care of the religious orders, and entered on successful polemics with Fénelon, Richard Simon, and the Jansenists.

From 1700 his health began to fail. This, however, did not prevent him from combating in defence of the Holy Faith. Confined to bed by illness, he dictated letters of controversial essays to his secretary. Saint-Simon says, "He died fighting."

Exhausted with work, he died peacefully in 1704.

Every Frenchman knows Bossuet as a master of style, and regards him as the greatest of all French churchmen. Truly, he is one of the greatest Catholic preachers and writers. The opposition between Bossuet and Simon, as well as between him and Fénelon, shows that he was not only a mere historian, but also a defender of the Holy Faith.

BOSSUET'S DISCOURSE ON UNIVERSAL HISTORY

The "Discourse on Universal History" is one of the four great works written by Bossuet, during the time he was a preceptor to the Dauphin, the son of King Louis XIV. This masterpiece was begun in 1677, and was published for the first time in 1681. It was written primarily for the education of the Dauphin; but while addressing it explicitly to the future king of France, Bossuet was fully aware that this work would be read by his contemporaries, as well as by the future generations.

The Discourse was not merely a narrative of events of secular importance, taking place on a world-wide stage. It was rather a proposition containing the following thought: From the creation of man, up to the present time, the Jewish-Christian Religion has been one and continuous, while in the same time, a succession of numerous mighty empires have passed across the stage

of history and have disappeared. This thought is clearly stated by Bossuet in the following passage:

"On voit la vérité toujours, victorieuse, les hérésies renversées, l'Eglise fondée sur la Pierre les abattre par le seul poids d'une autorité si bien établie, et s'affermir avec le temps, pendant qu'on voit au contraire les empires les plus florissans, non seulement s'affaiblir par la suite des années, mais encore se defaire mutuellement et tomber les uns sur les autres." (1)

The entire Discourse is based on two unparalleled inferences, which Bossuet states so forcefully in the following:

"Le premier est de faire voir tout ensemble l'autorité, et la sainteté de la religion, par sa propre stabilité et par sa durée perpétuelle. Le second est que, connaissant ce qui a causé la ruine de chaque empire, nous pouvons sur leur exemple trouver les moyens des soutenir les Etats, si fragiles de leur nature, sans toutefois oublier que ces soutiens mêmes sont sujets à la loi commune de la mortalité qui est attachée aux choses humaines, et qu'il faut porter plus haut ses espérances." (2)

The "Discourse on Universal History," as originally planned by Bossuet was to consist of two parts: Ancient

- (1) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet
- (2) Ibid.

and modern. The first part was to embrace all history from the beginning of the world to the fall of the old Roman Empire, and to the coronation of Charlemagne; the second, from Charlemagne to Bossuet. The first part is the "Discourse on Universal History", as we know it; the second was not even begun.

The Discourse is divided into three parts. Part One contains an epitome, in chronological sequence, of historical events from the creation down to about 800 A.D. It seems that the chronology and sequence for the earlier epochs, Bossuet derived entirely from the Pentateuch. For the history of the remaining empires, he relied mostly on Greek and Roman historians. Part Two is concerned entirely with the History of Religion as recorded in the Old and New Testaments.

Bossuet describes Part Two as follows:

"Les états differens du peuple de Dieu sous la loy de nature et sous les patriarches; sous Moïse et sous la loy écrite; sous David et sous les prophetes; depuis le retour de la captivité jusqu'à Jésus-Christ; et enfin sous Jésus-Christ mesme; c'est à dire sous la loy de grâce et sous l'Evangile; dans les siècles qui ont attendu le Messie, et dans ceux où il a paru. ..." (3)

Bossuet himself considers the second part of the Discourse as containing the force of the whole. Here we see that the main interest is directed to the causes, both, remote and immediate, determining the chronological sequence of events. In this part we also find the concentration of Bossuet's great power of presentation.

Part Three deals with the succession of great empires which Bossuet sees as: "Ces empires ont pour la pluspart une liaison nécessaire avec l'histoire du peuple de Dieu." In this section is rapidly reviewed the history of the rise and fall of Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Macedon and Rome. Here, as in Part Two, the main interest is directed to the causes determining the chronological sequence of events. The following quotation will give us a very good idea of Part Three:

"Dieu s'est servi des Assyriens et des Babyloniens pour chastier ce peuple; des Perses, pour le rétablir; d'Alexandre et de ses premiers successeurs, pour le protéger; d'Antiochus l'Illustre et de ses successeurs, pour l'exercer; des Romains, pour soutenir sa liberté contre les rois de Syrie, qui ne songeoient qu'à le détruire." (4)

The Discourse may be regarded from many points of view. We may consider its pedagogical, or its literary value; we may regard it as a work of apologetics, or as a philosophical work; or finally, as a universal history as its title proclaims it.

As a pedagogical work, it was splendidly conceived, for, it was intended for the education of a prince, who was to be a ruler of a great nation. It unfolded to him the past history of humanity, which Bossuet considered important for civilization. The Discourse was to bring back to the Dauphin the lessons in which he had already been instructed; but in a more philosophical way, because it emphasized the causes, both remote and proximate which were at work in the historical development. Intended for a Christian prince, it was in tone and substance profoundly Christian. It emphasized what in life, from the Christian point of view was truly valuable. It was intended to help the prince to adjust himself to the great tasks and problems of a king. It was actualistic in a high degree.

In spite of all the excellent lessons which the Discourse contained, it seems that Bossuet failed to

educate the future king of France. This was probably due to the fact that the Dauphin was not highly endowed, and the tutor was an intellectual giant. The pupil could hardly be blamed for not appreciating the Discourse, which required a mature and highly intellectual mind, in order to comprehend it and to appreciate it. It seems that Bossuet lacked the ability to adapt himself to the intellectual size of the boy he was teaching. He was too serious, and lacked the touch of a kindly humor. Brémond says: "He failed as the preceptor of the Dauphin, but he became the preceptor of Christian France.

The Discourse was intended not only for the education of the Dauphin, but also for the conversion of certain heretical groups, which were numerous at that time. In the first place, its Apologetics was directed against the "Libertins", who argued that all the events in the physical world, as well as in history, were absolutely dependent on, and conditioned by their natural causes. Against these, Bossuet argued as follows:

"Le soleil jette d'un seul coup, sans
se retenir, tout ce qu'il a de rayon;
mais Dieu, qui agit par intelligence

et avec une souveraine liberté, applique sa vertu où il luy plaist et autant qu'il luy plaist; et, comme en faisant le monde par sa parole il montre que rien ne le peine, en le faisant a plusieurs reprises il fait voir qu'il est le maistre de sa matière, de son action, de toute son entreprise, et qu'il n'a en agissant d'autre règle que sa volonté, toujours droite par ellemesme." (5)

Bossuet knew the Bible exceptionally well. It was the foundation of everything in his thought and teaching. No other writer was ever influenced more by any book, than was Bossuet by the Bible. His research in the writings of the Fathers of the Church, who were for him the veritable interpreters of the Holy Scripture, was immense.

The Discourse may be also regarded as a theology of history; for, Bossuet invokes in his work both, the revealed truth, and the data of the science of history. The main principles of this phase may be summarized thus: The Divine Providence is the ultimate efficient cause of the historical processes. The Almighty God not only sustains and directs the secondary causes, but sometimes interferes directly, suspending their

(5) Discourse on Universal History.

natural effects. Examples of such supernatural interferences of Divine Providence are miracles and prophecies. But Bossuet claims to be the expositor of the secret counsels of God, only so far as he understood these to be revealed in the Holy Scripture. There is no doubt that the Holy Scripture was his authority. He proves this in the following excerpt, by telling us that the Divine purpose was declared by the prophets in the case of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia:

"Aux Medes, et aux Perses, et à Cyrus, comme avoient dit les prophetes, 'cette superbe Babylone.' Ainsi périt avec elle le royaume des Chaldéens, qui avoit détruit tant d'autres royaumes, et le marteau qui avoit brisé tout l'univers fut brisé luy-mesme. Jérémie l'avoit prédit... Les peuples accoustumez au joug des rois chaldéens les voyent eux-mesme sous le joug; vous qui disiez dans vostre coeur: 'J'élèveray mon trône au dessus des astres, et je seray semblable au Tres-Haut.' C'est ce qui avoit prononcé le mesme Isaie. 'Elle tombe, elle tombe,' comme l'avoit dit ce prophete, 'cette grande Babylone, et ses idoles sont brisées.' " (6)

Bossuet's theory of Providence does not prevent him from seeing the secondary causes in the historical development. Especially in Part Three, he is concerned

with creative factors of various kinds. The following excerpt will show this very clearly.

"Ce mesme Dieu qui a fait l'enchaînement de l'univers, et qui, tout-puissant par luy-mesme, d'un si grand tout dépendissent les unes des autres, ce mesme Dieu a voulu aussi que le cours des choses humaines eust sa suite et ses proportions." (7)

Bossuet, with great precision states and emphasizes the different characteristics of the nations. In the Egyptians, for example, he praises their love of country, their inventive genius, their law-abiding disposition, their advancement in science, their art, education and agriculture. He says:

"Ces sages d'Egypte avoient étudié le régime qui fait les esprits solides, les corps robustes, les femmes fécondes et les enfans vigoureux. ... Il y a un art de former les corps aussi-bien que les esprits. Cet art, que nostre nonchalance nous a fait perdre, estoit bien connu des anciens, et l'Egypt l'avoit trouvé. ... Ses plus nobles travaux et son plus bel art consistoit à former les hommes. " (8)

He also notes the influence of geographical conditions, like the Nile; the influence of climate, the

(7) Discourse on Universal History.

(8) Ibid.

fertility, or the sterility of the soil. He also brings out very clearly the influence of one country on another.

Bossuet devotes in his Discourse two chapters to the Roman Empire. He exalts and praises their laws, the love of liberty and their great loyalty to the country.

"De tous les peuples du monde le plus fier et le plus hardi, mais tout ensemble le plus réglé dans ses conseils, le plus constant dans ses maximes, le plus avisé, le plus laborieux, et enfin le plus patient, a este le peuple romain. ... Le fond d'un Romain, pour ainsi parler, estoit l'amour de sa liberté et de sa patrie. ... (9)

Then again, Bossuet emphasizes the causes of the fall of Rome:

"Vous voyez que ce Etat, fondé sur la guerre, et par la naturellement dispose à empieter sur ses voisins, a mis tout, l'univers sous le joug pour avoir porté au plus haut point la politique et l'art militaire. ... Vous voyez les causes des divisions de la république, et finalement de sa chute, dans les jalousies de ses citoyens, et dans l'amour de la liberté pousse jusqu'à un excès et une délicatesse insupportable." (10)

In the following quotation Bossuet shows us that there is something more profound which influences the

(9) Discourse on Universal History

(10) Ibid.

historical process:

"Ce long enchaînement des causes particulières qui font et défont les empires dépend des ordres secrets de la divine Providence. Dieu tient du plus haut des cieux les rênes de tous les royaumes; il a tous les coeurs en sa main; ... C'est ainsi que Dieu regne sur tous les peuples." (11)

Regarding the relation between Divine Providence, and human liberty, it seems that Bossuet leans towards the Thomistic Doctrine. Divine universal causality and the freedom of the will were to him two incontestable factors. He holds, further, that truths once known should never be abandoned, regardless of the difficulties and doubts which may intervene, when we try to reconcile them.

Bossuet states with unusual tranquility the points of doctrine, the dual nature of man, his noble origin, the excellence and the immortality of his soul, and finally his direct linking with God. He speaks with conviction, like a master, indicating and warranting the way. He develops his Discourse without contest or effort. He makes no struggle to prove; he only recog-

(11) Discourse on Universal History

nizes and promulgates the spiritual things. He speaks of authorities and stabilities, like a man who takes pleasure in seeing order everywhere and in everything. According to Bossuet everything that moves onward to the idea of the intellectual and spiritual life, everything that helps to develop that higher part of the human being by which he is allied to the Supreme Being, is good. That which brings Bossuet closer to God is the principle of human grandeur rather than the sentiment of man's misery.

Bossuet traces with many historical details the course of events, and with great skill shows that they are intelligible only on the supposition that they are ordered by a wise and omnipotent God. To doubt the government of the Divine Ruler, Who assigns us our duty and our place, is to sap the principles of authority and of obedience. The doctrine of God's providence is at the center of Bossuet's system of thought. He considers God the greatest Monarch presiding over all the affairs of the world. The king is God's subject and his laws must be in conformity with the laws of the Divine Ruler. The Discourse is a vindication of the ways of

God in history; it is a theology of human progress. Bossuet exhibits the nations and generations of mankind bound together under the Providential government. He expounds magnificently the Divine policy in the government of the world.

When we consider this masterpiece as a history, we must read it in the light of the historical science, and the value of its time. As a Universal History, it has been criticized, because its horizon was too circumscribed. Voltaire ridiculed it as being merely a history of the Jews; because it excluded all consideration of India, China, the Phoenicians and the Hittites. These slight defects, however, are unable to mar the integrity of the masterpiece.

As regards Bossuet's style, Delphine Duval speaks thus;

"La multiplicité de Bossuet comme historien, orateur, théologien, controversiste, prédicateur et philosophe, éclate dans ce Discours. La plénitude de la langue répond à l'ampleur du sujet; son style est comme sa pensée; il a l'ordre, l'enchaînement, la vigueur, la clarté; on n'y sent jamais l'effort ni le tâtonnement." (12)

(12) Histoire de la Litterature francaise.

Truly, Bossuet's style places him in the front ranks of the seventeenth century prose writers. One of its greatest qualities is cadence. He not only cites the Scripture, but incorporates it into himself in such a manner that its imagery, its sententiousness and its gravity seem to flow from his mind. His images are picturesque, poetic, logical and always to the point. It is difficult to find a writer who would use a more direct and forcible language than Bossuet.

Charles Amiot considers Bossuet a poet, a man of all science, of all talents, and a universe in himself.

Truly, the Discourse is for us what the "De Civitate Dei" was for the Middle Ages.

Bossuet is the man of tradition, the image, and, if we may call him so, the magnificent incarnation of Christian past.

BOSSUET'S CONCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT

Bossuet wrote his Discourse on Universal History for the instruction of the Dauphin, the son of Louis XIV, whose preceptor he was. The most important aim of this work was to show his pupil, that humanity is governed by the Providence of God, Who has made His designs upon His creatures. Bossuet regards this doctrine of Providence, "comme une de ces vérités dont le sentiment appartient à l'homme instruit." He considers God as, "Un pilote qui tient en sa main le gouvernement de l'Univers."

Bossuet's conception of the State is based on the belief in the existence and the Providence of God.

"...il est hors de doute que c'est la divine Providence qui établit les royaumes de la terre. ... Vous voyez un ordre constant dans tous les desseins de Dieu, et une durée perpétuelle de son peuple." (1)

(1) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

God has endowed man with intelligence and free will, and has placed him on this earth to work out his eternal salvation. Man has been created for a purpose, and that purpose is to carry out the will of God.

With this thought in mind, Bossuet relates the history of the Jews, Ethiopians, Assyrians, Medes, Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, as well as the history of the establishment of Christianity. His Discourse on Universal History in its entirety is permeated and based upon an ethical conception of authority. He believes firmly, and proves the instability of those governments, which have forgotten that God is the first Cause of everything, and that all authority evolves from Him. This instability Bossuet expresses very vividly in the following passage:

"Et ou peut-on recevoir une plus belle leçon de la vanité des grandeurs humaines? Ainsi quand vous voyez passer comme en un instant devant vos yeux, je ne dis pas les rois et les empereurs, mais ces grands empires qui ont fait trembler tout l'univers: quand vous voyez les Assyriens anciens et nouveaux, les Mèdes, les Perses, les Grecs et les Romains se présenter devant vous successivement et tomber pour ainsi dire les uns sur les autres." (2)

The causes which brought about the fall of these great empires, says Bossuet, are not accidental; they had been ordained and permitted by God to punish these godless nations. Bossuet relates further that the first cause of the fall of Rome was jealousy between the Patricians and the Plebeians. Unity and the former spirit of patriotism gradually weakened to such an extent, that they were unable to resist their formidable enemy, the Carthaginians. Finally, jealousy brought about civil wars between the two classes, and Rome gave way to an entirely new spirit. Bossuet describes this first cause of the fall of the Roman Empire thus:

"Ainsi Rome, si jalouse de sa liberté, par cet amour même de la liberté qui était le fondement de son état, a vu la division se jeter entre les ordres dont elle était composée. De là ces jalousies furieuses entre le Senat et le peuple, entre les patriciens et les plébeins, les uns alléguant toujours que la liberté excessive se détruit enfin elle-même, les autres craignant au contraire que l'autorité qui de sa nature, croit toujours, ne dégénérât enfin en tyrannie. ... Les esprits ambitieux et remuants excitaient les jalousies, tantôt plus couvertes et tantôt plus déclarées selon les temps, mais toujours vivantes dans le fond des coeurs, ont enfin formé ce grand changement qui arriva du temps de Caesar." (3)

The second cause of the fall of Rome was the desire of luxury and riches. The Roman contact with the Oriental countries is responsible for this cause. Bossuet describes it thus:

"Pour comble de malheur les gens d'Asie apprennent le luxe aux Romains et augmentent l'avarice. Nous ne sommes plus au temps où un general romain qui n'avait que de la vaisselle de terre répondait aux messagers d'un peuple étranger qui lui en montraient d'or et d'argent pour le tenter que son plaisir n'était pas d'en avoir, mais de commander à qui en avait. Le luxe en haut augmentait la misère en bas, comme il arriva toujours, et ainsi se formait le plus mauvais état national, celui où le peuple est misérable et la haute classe exagérément riche..." (4)

Bossuet was a monarchist, but he understood very well the principles on which a republic was based, namely, that the citizens were not subjects of a ruler, but of laws, which they themselves made, and of which the leaders were only representatives. The following quotation shows us that the republican form of government is not an idea conceived by the modernists, but one which existed even in the Old Testament.

"Les historiens nous font voir un grand nombre de républiques, dont les unes se gouvernoient par tout le peuple, ce qui s'appeloit démocratie, et les autres par

les grands, ce qui s'appeloit aristocratie. ... Nous voyons en quelques endroits de l'Ecriture, l'autorité résider dans une communauté... Il semble qu'au commencement les Israélites vivoient dans une forme de république." (5)

Bossuet believes that whatever be the nature of the government, the leaders, or the rulers must always be aware of the fact that God is the paramount ruler of the world, and should look up to Him as their model and law in the administration of the State. "Les rois doivent plus que tous les autres s'abandonner à la providence de Dieu." says Bossuet. God Himself has instituted a ruling authority, and those who are invested with it ought to strive to the best of their ability, to reflect the divine power and providence, at least in some measure over their subjects. They should remember that a State from which religion is banished is running headlong into destruction. The rulers must know that religion is wonderfully helpful to the State, for, since it derives the prime origin of all authority from God, it charges the rulers to be mindful of their duties, to govern their subjects with justice and kindness,

(5) Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte, Bossuet

and with almost paternal charity. On the other hand, it admonishes the subjects to be obedient to lawful authority, as to the ministers of God.

"Les supérieurs apprennent qu'ils sont serviteurs des autres, et dévoués à leur bien; les inférieurs reconnoissent l'ordre de Dieu dans les puissances légitimes, lors mesme qu'elles abusent de leur autorité." (6)

Religion is greatly conducive to pure morals, and these in turn to liberty. History confirms the fact, that the higher the morality of a state, the greater are the liberty and the prosperity of the people, as says Bossuet:

"Dans le gouvernement légitime, les personnes sont libres. Le gouvernement est établi pour affranchir tous les hommes de toute oppression et de toute violence, comme il a été souvent démontré. Et c'est ce qui fait l'état de parfaite liberté; n'y ayant dans le fond rien de moins libre que l'anarchie, qui ôte d'entre les hommes toute prétention légitime et ne connaît d'autre droit que celui de force." (7)

The rulers should rule with justice, not as masters, but rather as fathers, because the rule of God over humanity is most just, and is always tempered with a father's kindness. All the governments should be administered for the well-being and the prosperity of the

(6) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

(7) Ibid.

citizens, because those who are in authority possess it solely for the welfare of the people and not for their own, as says Bossuet: "Le prince ne doit régner que pour le bien du peuple, dont il est le père et le juge." The rulers must keep in mind the Catholic doctrine which teaches that every individual in a society has his own individual end given him by God. Every human being is therefore, answerable to God alone, and not to his society, except when this society is delegated with God's authority.

Bossuet further exhorts the rulers or leaders of nations to hold in honor the holy name of God. In other words, he urges them to favor religion, to protect it, to shield it under the sanction of the laws, and to combat every measure that may compromise its safety. Every civil society is established for the common welfare; but it should safeguard not only the well-being of the community, but as much as possible help every individual to attain his final destiny, heaven. As says Bossuet: "Il faut donc avant toutes choses régler le culte de Dieu. C'est par où commence Moïse, et il pose ce fondement de la société des Israélites."

Since man is a social being, it follows that only in society he can live and develop a healthy human life. He is limited in every way, therefore, in many ways dependent upon external rulers, forces and authorities. This fact Pope Leo XIII states thus:

"Man's natural instinct moves him to live in civil society, for he cannot, if dwelling apart, provide himself with the necessary requirements of life, nor procure the means of developing his mental and moral faculties. Hence it is divinely ordained that he should lead his life - be it family, social, or civil - with his fellow men, amongst whom alone his several wants can be adequately supplied. But as no society can hold together unless some one be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has, consequently, God for its author. Hence it follows that all public power must proceed from God. For God alone is the Supreme Lord of the world. Everything, without exception must be subject to Him, and must serve Him, so that whosoever holds the right to govern, holds it from one sole and single source, namely, God, the Sovereign Ruler of all." (8)

Since the society is established for the greater good of the individuals constituting it, it follows, that the individual has rights which the State may not

(8) Encyclical Letter: The Christian Constitution of States.

violate; rights which it must respect always and everywhere in its legislations, for they are rights inherent in the human personality itself.

The will of the State is supreme and its commands obligatory, but only in so far, as they are in conformity with the natural law, which is the expression of the divine Will. The natural law is the foundation of the rights possessed by the individual, therefore, these rights must be respected by the public power, since the State is instituted to protect the individual. In virtue of this law, the individual has the right of pursuing his own personal destiny which involves his happiness and his perfection. He has, therefore, the right to act and to make use of his natural powers.

The State exists for the good of the individual, and not the individual for the good of the State. Any theory, making the State omnipotent, is un-Christian and must ultimately lead to disaster. Even though the end of the State be the temporal prosperity of its citizens, it has the right and the duty to protect their moral life, for, temporal prosperity and morality are closely united. All true individual and national

prosperity is based on virtue. The virtuous individuals are happy; the virtuous nations are prosperous.

The people do not exist in order to support the government, but the government exists for the welfare of the governed. The primary concern of any state is the good of all the citizens; physical, intellectual and moral. Under physical problems we may include sanitation, road-building etc. The State has a duty to protect the morals of the public by the restraint of evil-doers and by appropriate legislation. The State must also provide some means for the education of youth, but the particular form of education is a problem which belongs to the family. Religion is a matter of interior moral obligation, and the State has no right to dictate it, for, in this case the personal rights of the individual are higher than the rights of the State.

Pope Pius XI calls special attention to the fundamental rights of parents to educate their children according to their religious convictions.

"The Church is indeed conscious of her divine mission to all mankind, and of the obligation which all men have to practice the one true religion,

and therefore she never tires of defending her right, and of reminding parents of their duty, to have all Catholic-born children baptized and brought up as Christians." (9)

One who uses authority to oppress others is guilty of a crime of injustice against his fellow-men. Also, he who seizes authority by force, with a selfish view in mind, namely, that of gain or fame, and has no concern for his subjects, is worthy of the curse uttered by Our Lord:

"Malheur aux pasteurs d'Israel qui se paissent eux-mêmes. Les troupeaux ne doivent-ils pas être nourris par les pasteurs? Vous mangiez de leurs laines, et vous tuiez ce qu'il y avoit de plus gras dans le troupeau, et vous ne le paissiez pas ..." (10)

To despise legitimate authority, in whomever vested, is unlawful, and God considers it as a rebellion against Himself, for He instituted authority. A lawful and authoritative government has a right to obedience from the citizens, because it exists by the Will of God. God avenges this disobedience to legitimate authority, as says Bossuet:

(9) Encyclical Letter: Christian Education of Youth
(10) Ezech. XXXIV. 2, 3, 4.

"Le peuple ne pouvoit s'unir en soi-même par une société inviolable, si le traite n'en étoit fait dans son fond en présence d'une puissance supérieure, telle que celle de Dieu, protecteur naturel de la société humain, et inévitable vengeur de toute contravention à la foi." (11)

(11) Politique tirée de l'Ecriture Sainte.

MODERN CONCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT

The Christian view of government, and at the same time of authority, which in the past centuries appeared so self-evident, has become very obscure to many modern thinkers, and has given place to erroneous modern views. Pope Leo XIII speaks of it thus:

"Today, the authority of God is passed over in silence, just as if there were no God; or as if He cared nothing for human society; or as if men owed nothing to God; or as if there could be a government of which, the origin and authority did not reside in God Himself. Thus, a State becomes nothing but a multitude, which is its own master and ruler." (1)

In order to understand how detrimental and ungrounded are the philosophies and ideas of some of the modern leaders, I shall endeavor to point out, on what basic principles they have established the governments,

(1) Encyclical Letter: The Christian Constitution of States

at whose head they have placed themselves.

In the first place, Communism and Socialism have deluged the world with their corrupted, atheistic philosophy of Marx. His erroneous conception of authority, and at the same time of government has permeated Russia, and is continually and persistently spreading its deadly venom into other nations. Communism, we may say, is a stepchild of the Collectivism preached by Karl Marx and Frederick Engel, two German radical philosophers of the nineteenth century. However, the Communistic gods, Lenin and Stalin added some doctrines which are even more radical and more destructive.

In order to understand better to what extent this erroneous philosophy is detrimental to the nations which adopt it, let us analyze its basic principles.

Socialism, acting on its belief in the materialistic conception of history, established a State without reference to God, because it was born and nurtured in a philosophy that denies the existence of God, and that repudiates all man's duties toward his Creator. It teaches that the only source of our political, social

and ethical ideas are to be found in the economic conditions of production and distribution of goods.

Socialism in its proper sense is not a Christian feeling for the poor, for, it is an enemy of charity. It does not aim to better the condition of the poor; it is a revolutionary system of government, whose principles are detrimental, both to the individual and to society. Socialism, even in its rational and scientific form is visionary and impracticable. It takes an entirely false view on life; it is concerned only with the physical well-being and comfort of man. Not only that, but it considers him a mere animal, destined to live on this earth for some time, and then perish without any hope for, or any belief in life beyond the grave, and yet,

"Les patriarches et les prophetes ont vescu dans cette esperance, et Daniel avoit prédit qu'il viendrait un temps où ceux qui dorment dans la poussière s'éveilleroient, les uns pour la vie éternelle et les autres pour une éternelle confusion, afin de voir toujours. ...

C'est un des caracteres du peuple nouveau, de poser pour fondement de la religion la foy de la vie future, et ce devoit estre le fruit de la venue du Messie."(2)

The essence of Communism is contained in the declaration that man is good by nature and is sufficient for himself. In the philosophy of the Communist State the individual belongs wholly to the State. He or she has no intrinsic dignity, no value and no God-given rights. Communism looks at an individual as a cog in a wheel, or a stone in the masonry. The child is born for the State; therefore, Communism tries to indoctrinate the youth with the erroneous idea that the world should be viewed in a purely materialistic way, excluding God and good morals. The Communistic State is a slave State, because it deprives its citizens of all economic, as well as religious freedom. The three main elements advocated by this system are: 1. The denial of God, and the suppression of religion, especially the Catholic. 2. The abolition of private property. 3. The stirring up of hatred among the various classes in order to hasten a social upheaval resulting in a revolution.

Communism is a system of government under which all the instruments of production - the land, the banks, the factories, the stores, and the transportation system

are owned by the State. The people may own only personal things, such as clothing, and other articles of small value. Everyone is obliged to work for the government for small wages. No individual is able to make profits, because he owns nothing from which he could derive gains. His only source of income is low wages from the government.

The aim of Communism is to establish the most perfect equality among men, a society without any class distinction. In order to accomplish this aim, they advocate a complete suppression of private property. Everything the individual owns becomes common property under the administration of the State. Under the Communistic régime, there is only one class of people - the workers. The owning classes are dispossessed of the property.

"Nor is the individual granted any property rights over material goods or the means of production, for, inasmuch as these are the source of further wealth, their possession would give one man power over another. Precisely on this score, all forms of private property must be eradicated for they are at the origin of all economic enslavement." (3)

(3) Encyclical Letter: Rerum Novarum - Pope Leo XIII.

Communism is contrary to the capitalistic system, for it provides for the abolition of the inequalities in wealth, and is based upon a common ownership of property. Under its régime all the financial returns are equally divided among all. The end here pursued is regarded by Pope Pius XI as:

"Supremely unjust because it violates the legitimate rights of owners, distorts the functions of the State and threatens to uproot the social edifice from its foundation." (4)

Under Communism, there is a complete suppression of liberty of speech, press and assembly on any issue. The Communistic leaders consider the suppression of these liberties logical, "because," they say, "it is impossible to perpetuate a dictatorship unless the people are deprived of all possibilities of voicing their opinion, and of learning the truth of what is happening in their country." To utter a critical word against Stalin, or the system of government, is to be guilty of crime. Pope Pius XI speaks of this system as follows:

"It is a system full of errors and sophisms. It is in opposition both to reason and to divine Revelation. It subverts the social order, because

it means the destruction of the foundations; because it ignores the true origin and purpose of the State; because it denies the rights, dignity and liberty of human personality. ... In such a doctrine, as is evident, there is no room for the idea of God; there is no difference between matter and spirit, between soul and body; there is neither survival of the soul after death, nor any hope in a future life. ... Communism, moreover, strips man of his liberty, robs human personality of all its dignity and removes all the moral restraints, that check the eruptions of blind impulse. There is no recognition of any right of the individual in his relations to the collectivity; no natural right is accorded to human personality, which is a mere cogwheel in the Communistic system." (5)

As far as religion is concerned, there is no place for it in the Communistic society. This is evident from every reference to religion in the Communistic literature. For example, the A.B.C. of Communism says:

"Religion is the opium of the people. It is the task of the Communist Party to make this truth comprehensible to the widest possible circles of the labouring masses. ... Religion and Communism are incompatible, both theoretically and practically. ... Man controls natural forces not thanks to his faith in God, and in divine assistance, but in spite of this faith."

(5) Encyclical Letter: Divini Redemptoris

What a contrast between the Communistic outlook on religion, and that of the pagan, Romulus, the founder of Rome: "Il commenca par la religion, qu'il regarda comme le fondement des Etats." (6)

By a decree of April 8, 1929, Article 18 states: "The teaching of any religious belief whatsoever is forbidden in State, public or private schools." In the recently written book entitled, "Anti-religious Education of the Elementary Schools," by E. Perovsky, the following assertions are found:

"Children must know that religion hinders the industrialization of the country, stupefying the minds of men and women workers by a belief in an immaterial god, who is supposed to regulate the life of each individual. Religion makes them still less stoic athletes in the conquering of difficulties. ... Those who follow religious tradition and listen to the agitation of the Popes, for whom religious peace is nothing more than strong campaigns intended to deceive toilers and mobilize their forces for popish purposes; these numerous worshipping men and women workers not understanding this, up to this day are inclined to remain in idleness on religious feast days, particularly such great feasts as Christmas and Easter."

Communism is atheistic materialism seeking to take the place of religion, and aiming in particular to destroy Christianity. Its main aim is to do away with God. The Communists forget that God is the Creator and Master of all, as says Bossuet:

"L'histoire du peuple de Dieu, attestée par sa propre suite et par la religion tant de ceux qui l'ont écrite que de ceux qui l'ont conservée avec tant de soin, a gardé comme dans un fidele registre la mémoire de ces miracles, et nous donne par là l'idée véritable de l'empire suprême de Dieu maistre tout-puissant de ses creatures, soit pour les tenir sujets aux loix générales qu'il a établies; ..." (7)

The Communists believe firmly that man's destiny is only of this earth. To the Communist, man is an aggregation of cells, having no future beyond this world, and whose only aim is to work for his society. According to Marx's principles, religion serves for the subjugation and oppression of the toilers. For this reason, it is essential that Communists combat every existing religion.

We see then, that the Communists persecute the Church with indefatigable persistence; but let them be

(7) Discourse on Universal History

aware, lest they meet with the same fate as the first persecutor of that Church.

"Neron commenca ... la persécution contre les Chrestiens. C'est le premier empereur qui ait persécuté l'Eglise. Il fit mourir à Rome saint Pierre et saint Paul. Mais, comme dans le mesme temps il persécutoit tout le genre humain, on se revolta contre luy de tous costez; il apprit que le senat l'avoit condamné, et se tua luy-mesme." (8)

Communism considers the Catholic Church the only international obstacle capable of blocking the communistic plan of dereligionizing the world. By attacking the Catholic Church, it is but renewing the struggle that God, in the Garden of Eden declared would exist between the Kingdom of God, and the powers of darkness. Envy and hatred prompted the Jews to murder Christ, the founder of the Catholic Church. Today hatred prompts the Communists to persecute that Church.

"Parmi toutes les Eglises, l'Eglise de Rome fut persécutée avec le plus de violence; et les papes confirmerent souvent par leur sang l'évangile qu'ils annonçoient à toute la terre." (9)

Pope Pius XI refers to Satan as the motivating force back of the Communistic attack on Almighty God.

(8) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

(9) Ibid.

He identifies the enemy thus: "The spirit of evil; Satanic hatred of religion; the unchained powers of darkness; the Satanical banners of war against God; diabolical reasoning; the dark power; the sower of tares."

Time and again man has endeavored to put God out of his life; but whenever he has done so, his very being has demanded that he worship some false deity. Today Communism's irreligion forcefully portrays the evil effects of turning away from God. The Church Militant, however, with the Holy Father at its head, boldly faces all these persecutions; and the only consolation that it possesses are the words full of assurance spoken by the Founder of His Church, Jesus Christ: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gate of hell shall not prevail against it."

"Elle estoit catholique et universelle: elle embrassoit tous les temps; elle s'étendoit de tous costez. Elle estoit apostolique; la suite, la succession, la chaire de l'unité, l'autorité primitive luy appartenoit. ... Les payens eux-mesmes la regardoient comme celle qui estoit la tige, ... le tronc toujours vif que les branches retranchées laissoient en son entier." (10)

(10) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

The Communists call their government, "the dictatorship of the proletariat." In reality, it is the dictatorship of one man, Stalin. Contrary to the idea of Marx and Lenin, its only purpose is to perpetuate itself. It is not a form of government which seeks the common good of its citizens, for, its prerogative is terrorism. The motto of the Communists is: "Down with the love of our neighbor; we want hate." For this reason it is contrary to Democracy, because Democracy is based on the brotherhood of man, which in turn rests on the fatherhood of God. It is further opposed to Democracy, because this form of government believes that men are endowed with certain inalienable rights, such as the right to worship God, the right to personal freedom and property, the right to marriage and a family, and the right to educate one's children. Communism, not only denies these rights to its citizens, but what is worse, makes attempts to destroy them entirely. Under Communism the individual is effaced by the demand of the party, and the laws are enforced by the dictator. The vital issue of Communism today is the subordination of man, body and soul, to the economic machinery of the State.

Although Fascism came into existence at approximately the same time as Communism, its basic principles are different from those of the Communists.

This new form of government developed in Italy after the World War, during a period of crisis and national discouragement. There was at that time a great deal of unemployment, because the returning soldiers could find no work. Besides, they felt that they had returned to a topsy-turvy world in which all that had inspired them seemed irretrievably lost, and deliberately repudiated. Discontentment among the working classes began to manifest itself in strikes. The government took no decisive action, because it was too vacillating and impotent. Communistic philosophy and ideas were spreading rapidly in the country. In the midst of this unrest, there was

a cry for someone, who would restore peace and order in the country. It was in this soil that the seeds of Fascism began to germinate, for, in a short time Benito Mussolini appeared with his bands of men known as "Fascists". His first aim was to banish all communistic principles, and to establish capitalism on firm basis.

In 1922, Mussolini with his followers marched to Rome and seized the government. Shortly after he proclaimed himself a dictator. Seeing the country in a deplorable condition, he forced capitalists, laborers and farmers to serve the general interests of the nation.

Fascism, therefore is a government by a self-appointed dictator who sets up rules, disregarding the will of the people, and who subjects private interests to the good of the nation. Fascism aims primarily at recasting the political structure, although it preserves capitalism and establishes new and closer relationships between the political and economic phases of national life. In the second place, Fascism glorifies and stresses the importance and the role of the State. For the Fascists, the State is a great spiritual entity to which

every individual must be subordinated, and against which none has ultimately any inalienable and enforceable rights. They maintain further that, although the individual has rights, he cannot use them if they conflict with the needs of the State. It seems that the old Roman principles are reviving in the Fascist government where,

"on n'y entendoit parler d'autre chose que de la grandeur du nom romain. Il, falloit aller à la guerre quand la république l'ordonnoit, et là travailler sans cesse, camper hiver et été, obéir sans résistance, mourir ou vaincre." (11)

However, unlike Communism, it allows the owners of factories as well as smaller property owners to hold and manage their enterprises, although under rigid state regulations. Fascism aims at the socialization of the economic life of the nation, by the incorporation of both, the employers and the employed into great corporations.

Although Fascism solved some national problems, yet it has great shortcomings and fatal handicaps.

(11) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

In the first place, it suppresses freedom of speech, press, and education; hence it discourages self-expression and thinking which are necessary for economic, political and scientific advancement. Secondly, the Fascist State has taken over the entire educational system, in order to indoctrinate the youth with their ideas, and thus train faithful followers. Fascism demands of its people blind obedience, and respect for authority. The individual has only such rights as the State grants him. Apart from the State, the individual has no significance, for as Mussolini says:

"The foundation of Fascism is the conception of the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State. ... The Fascist State is itself conscious, and has itself a will and a personality." (12)

Fascism as established by Mussolini is not conceived as an aggregate of groups and individuals, but as a spiritual entity, from which the individual is not eliminated, but subordinated to the State. Fascism is

(12) Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism

totalitarian, because according to its doctrines, nothing outside of the State has any value. The man is so absorbed by the State, that there are no limits of jurisdiction over him. The Fascist State regiments the individual in accordance with its own standards of life. These standards of course, the State determines by its own selfish needs.

In its political theory, Fascism attacks democracy; for it sees in it only outworn dogmas, to be rejected as inherently unsound and obsolete for modern generations. Fascism cannot reconcile itself with the idea that society should exist for the well-being and the personal happiness and liberty of its subjects. It seems to the Fascist that this idea is not at all in conformity with the plans of nature in whose workings, they believe, only race is considered, and the individual sacrificed to it. Fascism advocates the false doctrine that all rights depend upon the State, whereas the very assumption on which a democracy is based, is that every human being has rights which even the State must not only recognize, but preserve and foster.

The complex economic structure in the Fascist State is very striking. It is planned and supervised by the State, with a view to the well-being and the political power of the whole nation. It accomplishes this in two ways: First, it regulates the relations between capital and labor; and secondly, it promotes economic prosperity by regulating production. Fascism is often looked upon as a method for maintaining order in the existing capitalism.

The entire fascist system, whether economic or political is founded on the philosophy of the nation-state. In accordance with the totalitarian principles there are no limits to what the State may require of its subjects, and the latter must obey without the least resistance. * Mussolini says: "Discipline must be accepted, when it is not accepted, it must be imposed." The cardinal fascist principle is: "Might is right." It is not sufficient that the individual accepts discipline; he must approve it whole-heartedly. Fascism strives for a common conviction and for one party; and in order to accomplish this, it suppresses free speech, brings under govern-

ment control even the mental faculties of the individual, so that the latter could not even have a thought contrary to that of the State. In this respect we may compare Fascism to the Pharisees who, as" says Bossuet,

"... voulurent gouverner, et en effet ils se donnerent un pouvoir absolu sur le peuple; ils se rendirent les arbitres de la doctrine et de la religion, qu'ils tournerent insensiblement à des pratiques superstitieuses, utiles à leur interest et à la domination qu'ils vouloient établir sur les consciences." (13)

Fascism indoctrinates its subjects with the philosophy of the totalitarian State, which claims authority over all the aspects of life. It considers the problem of educating the youth one of the most important means for guaranteeing the continuity of its historic foundations. Therefore, the Fascists attempt to control all the forms of education. Their instruction is mostly in the form of propaganda, which does not develop the intellect, but imbues the child with fascist principles. The various youth movements are of great importance to the government, for through these, the State can very forcibly instil the fascist ideas and attitudes. The purpose of this training is not to develop thinking,

(13) Discourse on Universal History

but to indoctrinate the mind, and keep it closed. Training the mind to think for itself, to weigh and examine evidences and facts, to form its own conclusions, is not at all the object of the fascist training. Fascism looks upon tolerance and liberty of conviction and expression as not only inconsistent with its principles, but as a menace to the State.

The claim which the Fascist State assumes over the individual in every walk of his life, brings it into a conflict with the Church, which must reject the idea of "rendering everything unto Caesar." Pope Pius XI made this clear when he protested strongly against the attempt "to monopolize the young for the exclusive advantage of a régime based on a real pagan worship of the State." We see then, that the idea that God is the Omnipotent Ruler and Creator of everything is entirely excluded from the Fascist conception of government; and yet,

"Sur ce principe de religion, sur ce fondement sacré estoit bastie toute la loy; loy sainte, juste, bienfaisante, honneste, sage, prévoyante et simple, qui lioit la société des hommes entre eux par la sainte société de l'homme avec Dieu." (14)

(14) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

In its beginnings, Fascism was strongly opposed to all religions. We may infer this from what Mussolini said:

"Fascism is the strongest of all the heresies that strike at the doors of the church. ... Away with these temples that are doomed to destruction; for our triumphant heresy is destined to illuminate all brains and hearts."

His opinion, however, along this line has changed greatly in a comparatively short time, for in 1932 he wrote:

"... an irreligious State is not a state at all. ... It is not the intention of Fascism to drive God from heaven and sweep religion from the face of the earth... In the Fascist State religion is considered to be one of the deepest spiritual manifestations. Religion is, therefore, not only respected but defended and protected."

We see therefore, that Fascism as such is not directly hostile to religion, for it gave the Church a greater recognition than any democratic régime. In Italy, the Fascist State takes an objective and realistic attitude toward religion. It recognizes the Church as a living element in the nation, which must be incorporated into the new régime. Mussolini recognizes the

ethical basis of the State, and of the political authority, on which the alliance of the spiritual and the temporal powers have always been based. It is strange to say that in the perplexing domain of relations between the State and the Church, the Fascist government has accomplished by the Lateran Treaty of 1929, what its predecessors failed to achieve. This treaty brought an end to the age-long quarrel and to the imprisonment of the Pope. All the Catholic claims to the former Papal State were relinquished in return for Italian recognition of the complete political independence of the Vatican City. This tiny State, with an area of 108.7 acres was confirmed with full legislative and executive powers, a separate flag and seal, a postal system, a coinage system, and a complete independence of the Italian authorities. The Concordat was stretched even further than that. All the cults are permitted to preach and practice their creeds, but the Catholic religion is recognized as the state religion.

International peace is neither desirable nor possible to Fascism. Mussolini says: "Fascism repudiates the doctrine of pacifism. ... War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy. ... Thus a doctrine which is founded on this harmful postulate of peace is hostile to Fascism." How much could the Fascists learn in this respect from the old Egyptian Empire which,

"Contente de son païs où tout abonde, elle ne songeoit point aux conquestes. ... L'Egypte aimoit la paix, parce qu'elle aimoit la justice, et n'avoit des soldats que pour sa défense." (15)

The main purpose of Fascism is to organize a state strong enough to stand above all individuals, and sectional interests. It denounces bourgeois democracy; it denies the ability of the masses to decide political issues; it proposes the organization of a State led by the élite. Mussolini expresses his view on this point in the following manner: "Fascism denies that numbers, ... can play the role of leaders of human communities. Fascism denies that numbers can govern, through a system of periodical consultation of the electorate."

(15) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

Mussolini describes further the Fascist State as:
"something absolute, before which individuals and groups are something relative. Individuals and groups are conceivable only inasmuch as they exist within the state."

From the above statements we may infer that for Fascism, the State is the end, and the individual the means. It proclaims itself to be the highest form of social organization.

Alfred Rocco, the ex-Minister of Justice under the Fascist regime defines the nation as:

"... that living moral entity, which although composed of individuals, transcends the scope and life of its components, identifying itself with the history and the finalities of an uninterrupted series of generations."

It is a moral entity, he explains, because it is composed of human beings. From this source the Fascists deduced their famous principles: "All in the state and for the state; nothing outside the state, nothing against the state."

Pope Pius XI has greatly criticized the fascist doctrine. He explained that the fascist conception of the State could not be reconciled with the natural rights of the family, nor the freedom of the Church.

In order to understand the present form of government in Germany, it is necessary to recall the mental and physical sufferings which the German people have undergone after the World War. The roots of National Socialism, however, lie buried deep in past history.

Especially the ruling class in Germany had been influenced greatly by the writers, historians and philosophers. Hegel, particularly left his indelible mark in the history of the German people through his glorification of the State, when he said: "The State is God on earth, and the individuals exist only to serve the state." Hegel's philosophy permeated the Germans to such an extent that they were fully convinced that civilization is spread only by war, and that the success of this demands the suppression of the less capable races. War and force, therefore, became the embodiment of progress.

The early post-war years in Germany were very discouraging to all the classes of people. The former rulers had abdicated, and the inexperienced Social Democratic rulers were confronted with the problems of setting up a new democratic state, and saving the country from Communism.

Depression and political difficulties created distrust and hatred for the Republic. The Reichstag was incapable of coping with the economic and financial problems, which were confronting the country. Therefore, Hitler's accession to power, as well as the beginning of the so-called, Nazi revolution was hailed by many Germans, who considered this movement their board of safety.

The Nazi conception of the State is a totalitarian nation, which completely subordinates all the interests of the individual to those of the State. The individual exists solely to serve the State, therefore, every phase of life, whether public or private must be coordinated with the State. What a regression in an apparently modern nation! Even the Egyptians had a much saner understanding

of the purpose of government.

"Les Egyptiens sont les premiers où l'on ait scéu les regles du gouvernement. Cette nation grave et serieuse connut d'abord la vraye fin de la politique, qui est de rendre la vie commode et les peuples heureux. ... Leurs loix estoient simples, pleines d'équité, et propres à unir entre eux les citoyens." (16)

Democratic views and conceptions of authority which are based on the will of the people are a curse to the Nazi. For their Weimar democracy, they have substituted a completely centralized régime, based on the principle of leadership, according to which, one man - Hitler, vested with unlimited power, is the head of the entire nation. Under his rule, Germany became a most completely unified and centralized State.

Let us see however, what conception this apparently great leader has of authority. He says:

"The primary basis for establishing authority is always popularity. An authority, however, which rests on this foundation alone, is still very weak and unstable. ... It must seek to secure the basis of authority by building up power. In power, that is in force we see the second basis of all authority."

(16) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

Hitler despises the democratic conception of authority, and therefore he writes: "Do they think that the progress of the world originates in the brain of majorities and not in the heads of individuals?" He further accuses political democracies of annihilating individual responsibilities; but this is exactly what Naziism is doing to the individual. He manifests his hatred for democracy thus:

"Humanity, love of mankind, love of peace, freedom - all these are idols... We seek the total destruction of dishonorable democracy which ignores the foundations of race. This idea of national honor will be for us the Alpha and Omega of all thought and action."

His hatred for democratic principles is clearly manifested in the recent treatment administered to the Jews in Germany. This is an example of class war; and according to Catholicism, as well as according to democratic principles, the function of the State is not to carry on class wars, but to prevent them, because every man has a duty to honor and respect every other man. No State is the supreme master of men, and no individual has any right to destroy the life or happiness of any

other individual. The Nazi concept of the State, and the errors concerning man's liberties are implicitly condemned when Pope Pius XI observes that the Catholic idea of legitimate civil authority "is equally removed from all extremes of error and all exaggerations of parties or systems which stem from error."

In the Third Reich, the schools became primarily the agencies for the Nazi propaganda. School administrators, as well as the teachers have been so carefully sifted out, that at the present time the educational system is exclusively under the Nazi régime. Their foremost aim is to indoctrinate the youth with the conception that the welfare of the individual must be subordinated to the good of the State. Besides this, there are other principles which stand out as controlling dogmas in education. First, there is the doctrine of sheer force. The State is power, and Adolf Hitler is the State. This force is not merely a means to an end; it is a god, which is to be praised and glorified.

The Nazi educational system, not only despises, but also forbids open discussions. It considers the judicial

temper as a sign of weakness. Its purpose is not to develop intellectual thinkers, but to turn out a generation drilled in party doctrines, a generation ignorant of all other considerations, contemptuous of other races; and as is obvious, equip that generation with strong bodies and narrow minds; so that, the work of the State could not be impeded by those who would dare to think, and so point out to the State its un-Christian and undemocratic dealings with the subjects. It is true that the State must provide for the education of youth, but the particular education is a matter to be decided by the family. As says Pope Pius XI:

"Parents who are earnest and conscious of their educative duties, have a primary right to the education of the children God has given them in the spirit of their Faith, and according to its prescriptions. Laws and measures which in school questions fail to respect this freedom of the parents go against natural law, and are immoral. The Church, whose mission it is to preserve and explain the natural law, as it is divine in its origin, cannot but declare that the recent enrollment into schools organized without a semblance of freedom is the result of unjust pressure, and is a violation of every common right." (17)

(17) Encyclical Letter: Germany and the Church

Under the Nazi system the condition of the woman is deplorable. The Nazi believe that Nature fitted the woman for life behind the four walls of a house, not for public life. The mother must cheerfully leave the education of her children to the State, which can prepare her sons for heroic sacrifices on the battlefields. From this we can infer, that the State is growing more important than the home. Each newly issued law tends to put the child more completely under the authority of the State. The State is all-important, not the individual mother, or the child. It is the State that needs children for furthering its cause, not the parents. The children are so imbued with the Nazi spirit and doctrines, that they very easily yield to the persuasion of the Nazi emotional patriotism. They firmly believe that their duty to the State is greater than to their parents. The occupations of the children are so regimented, and a system of thought-control so fashioned, that from birth on, the child has not a moment for himself. Propaganda is woven even into nursery rhymes.

Let us see now what attitude Naziism takes toward

the Church. In the first place, Hitler presents to us his system of government as a virtually new religion which consists in the deification of the German race. His point of view in this respect may be compared to Ancient Egypt where

"Tout estoit Dieu, excepté Dieu mesme; et le monde, que Dieu avoit fait pour manifester sa puissance, sembloit estre devenu un temple d'idoles. Le genre humain s'égara jusqu'a adorer ses vices et ses passions." (18)

In the second place, he states that Christianity must either be changed into this new religion, or be destroyed entirely. He writes of Christianity thus:

"Fanatical intolerance alone made it possible to build up that adamantine creed, 'Christianity'... A world view animated by devilish intolerance can be broken only by a new conception impelled by a similar spirit and fought for with an equally strong will. ... force is broken only by force and terrorism only by terrorism." (19)

Hans Kerrl, a fanatical disciple of Hitler announced the rise of a new authority in Germany, in the following manner: "A new authority has arisen in Germany to say what are the meanings of Christ and Christianity. This

(18) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

(19) 13th Edition of Hitler's Book

authority is Adolf Hitler." Only a man deprived of his proper senses could utter a similar idea. Pope Pius XI speaks on this point as follows:

"The peak of the Revelation as reached in the Gospel of Christ is final and permanent. It knows no retouches by human hand; it admits no substitutes or arbitrary alternatives such as certain leaders pretend to draw from the so-called myth of race and blood. ... No man, were every science, power and worldly strength incarnated in him, can lay any other foundation but that which is laid: which is Christ Jesus. Should any man dare, in sacrilegious disregard of the essential differences between God and His creature, between the God-man and the children of man, to place a mortal, were he the greatest of all times, by the side of, or over, or against, Christ, he would deserve to be called a prophet of nothingness, to whom the terrifying words of Scripture would be applicable: 'He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them.' " (Psalm 11. 3) (20)

Hitler is ready to sacrifice the most sublime ideals for the restoration of his god, the German race. This we may clearly see in the following passage, taken from a speech he made before he took over the government of the Reich: "We may be inhuman! But if we save Germany we have accomplished the greatest thing in the world.

(20) Encyclical Letter: Germany and the Church

We may be unjust! But if we save Germany, we have repaired the greatest injustice in the world. We may be immoral! But if our people is saved we have paved the way to morality."

In his doctrinal exposition, the Pope determines the place that race should play in human affairs. He grants that a race may have in the natural order an essential place and one worthy of respect; but this does not justify elevating race into the scale of religious values; nor does it permit us to deify it with an idolatrous cult. The Pope, therefore condemns Hitler's attitude toward the German race, as follows:

"Whoever exalts race, or the people, or the State, or a particular form of State, or the depositories of power, or any other fundamental value of the human community - however necessary and honorable be their function in worldly things - whoever raises these notions above their standard value and divinizes them to an idolatrous level, distorts and perverts an order of the world planned and created by God; he is far from the true faith in God and from the concept of life which that faith upholds." (21)

Hitler believes strongly in the separation of religion and politics. He believes that if there is any dispute between religion and politics, the State, which

(21) Encyclical Letter: Germany and the Church

is considered the political leader, has the final and decisive word. He persecutes the Priests and the Religious, and confiscates their property. We say of him, what Bossuet said of Antiochus l'Illustre:

"Il profane le temple de Dieu, que les rois ses ancêtres avoient révé-
ré; il le pille, et répare par les richesses qu'il y trouve les ruines de son trésor épuisé. Sous prétexte de rendre conformes les mœurs de ses sujets, et en effet pour assouvir son avarice en pillant toutes la Judée, il ordonne aux Juifs d'adorer les mesmes dieux que les Grecs; ... il entreprend le détruire les festes, ... les sacrifices, la religion, et tout le peuple." (22)

Step by step, the Church has been deprived of its rights, its schools, its press and its Catholic organizations; and therefore,

"Le Dieu Createur de monde n'avoit de temple ni de culte qu'en Jerusalem, ... Toute la terre estoit possédée de la mesme erreur; la vérité n'y osoit paroistre." (23)

The Catholic publishers find themselves in a dangerous predicament, for, if they dare publish the Papal Encyclicals on Germany, they are either closed or con-

(22) Discourse on Universal History, Bossuet

(23) Ibid.

fiscated. The Nazi press hurls a steady stream of insults at the Pope, bishops, priests, religious communities and Catholic laity. The fundamental laws of morality are challenged in theory and practice. Devilish new creeds are propagated through all the means available. The Nazi employ every means within their reach, to create a pan-German Church. And again, Pope Pius XI answers to these nonsensical ideas as follows.

"None but superficial minds could stumble into concepts of a national God, of a national religion; or attempt to lock within the frontiers of a single people, within the narrow limits of a single race, God, the Creator of the universe, King and Legislator of all nations before whose immensity they are 'as a drop of a bucket.'" (24)

In contrast to those who would erect racial barriers, the Catholic Church, which was founded by Christ Himself, serves all peoples and all nations. Under her roof, all people and all tongues find a place.

(24) Encyclical Letter: Germany and the Church

CONCLUSION

God, the Creator of all holds in His hands the destinies of not only the individual creatures, but also of all the nations. He allows the fall of one nation and the rise of another; He punishes the innocent with the guilty; He often allows sin to rule over virtue; and the godless to oppress the virtuous. He permits this because in spite of sin, which is due to the wilful perversion of human liberty, and in spite of evil which is the consequence of sin, He directs all, even evil and sin itself, to the end for which the universe was created. "In spite of the wicked, God's counsels are never changed or thwarted." (1) Bossuet states this thought as follows:

"C'est luy qui prépare les effets dans les causes les plus éloignées, et qui frappe ces grands coups dont le contre-coup porte si loin. Quand il veut lasser le dernier et renverser les empires, tout est foible et irrégulier dans les conseils." (2)

But in all this God has His own designs, for, as Saint

(1) Is., XLV, 24-7

(2) Discourse on Universal History

Thomas points out, the Providence by which God rules the world is like the providence by which a father governs his family, or a ruler directs a city or a state.

Every government should strive to the best of its ability to imitate this Divine Providence. The State should remember that it exists for man, and not the man for the State. It is the man and not the State that is endowed with a human soul; it is the man and not the State that is called to eternal destiny. The State must remember that prior to it, both in nature and time, was man and the family.

Moreover, no government deserves the name, unless it recognizes God as the supreme Ruler of mankind, and makes His divine law the basis of its own legislation; unless it considers religion and morality as the sound foundation of civil society. We know that the want of religion is the source of every social evil; for history proves that wherever religion declines, liberty perishes, passions brutalize, pauperism flourishes, obedience to law disappears, and a state of barbarism and anarchy follows.

Bossuet states this very emphatically when he tells us that from his "Discourse on Universal History,

"...nous tirons deux fruits... Le premier est de faire voir tout ensemble l'autorité et la sainteté de la religion, par sa propre stabilité et par sa durée perpétuelle. Le second est que, connoissant ce qui a causé la ruine de chaque empire, nous pouvons sur leur exemple trouver les moyens de soutenir les Etats, si fragiles de leur nature, sans toutefois oublier que ces soutiens mêmes sont sujets à la loi commune de la mortalité qui est attachée aux choses humaines, et qu'il faut porter plus haut ses espérances." (3)

If the nations today would only profit by the examples which Bossuet brings out so forcefully in his "Discourse on Universal History", there would be less godlessness, less oppression, more religion, greater love of God, and consequently more happiness and liberty.

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